



Founded 1125

READING SCHOOL

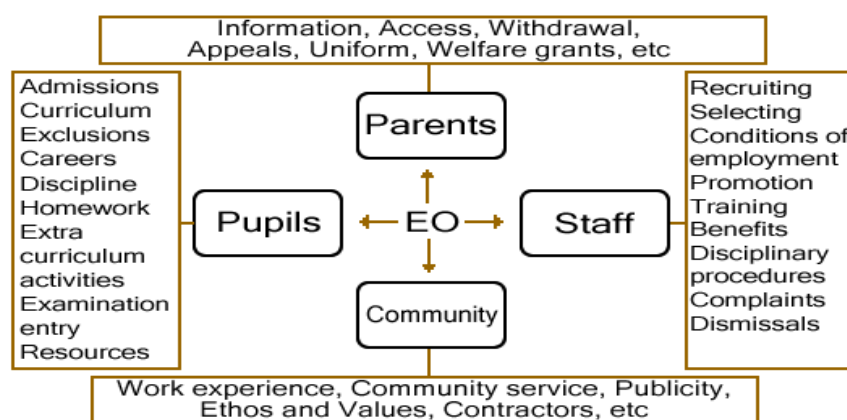
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

Background - The Companies Act 2006

Reading School (The Academy) is the employer. The business of the Academy Trust is managed by the Governing Body.

Introduction

The scope of equal opportunities in the context of maintained schools can be illustrated by the following diagram, which shows how equal opportunities make an impact on the whole school - students, staff, parents and the community.



The Headmaster has a responsibility to ensure that he does not commit unlawful discriminatory acts and that the Governing Body's equal opportunities policies are implemented in the school. It is good practice for the Headmaster to ensure that:

- governing bodies have an equal opportunities policy/policies which is/are regularly monitored and reviewed
- there is a procedure for checking that all staff know the equal opportunities policies and implement them both in other policy documents and in their own actions
- staff are aware of what constitutes direct and indirect discrimination
- staff have appropriate training related to equal opportunities, anti-bullying, anti-harassment and anti-discrimination

- performance management policies and practices reflect the school's commitment to equal opportunities

Student Issues

Reading School aims to make it clear to parents, carers and their students that the school has an equal opportunities policy that means it is committed to equality of opportunity for all its students. The Headmaster will monitor the impact of their policies and procedures on different groups with protected characteristic (i.e. sex, race, age, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage, pregnancy or maternity) and the effectiveness of such policies will be reported to and assessed by governors at committee and full governing body meetings. The Governing Body is required to publish a school prospectus for parents and prospective parents. The prospectus should include information about:

- Arrangements for the admission of students with disabilities.
- Details of steps to prevent disabled students being treated less favourably than other students.
- Details of existing facilities to assist access to the school by students with disabilities.

Admissions and the Curriculum

Reading School must ensure that their admissions policies fully embrace all aspects of the current National Admissions code.

Equality of opportunity does not mean that all students will study all subjects on offer, but it does mean that they should have an equal chance to study all such subjects. Care will be taken in the structuring of the timetable to make this choice real, particularly with respect to so-called 'non-traditional' subjects.

Where lack of prior education and experience in certain skills prevents students from participating in the full range of curricular options, schools should consider the possibility of mounting courses to provide students with the knowledge that they need.

Careers information - careers advice, interviews and literature must promote equality of opportunity.

Governors should be satisfied that students have access to all extra-curricular activities, visits and trips and that it is not assumed that certain activities are suitable for students. Governors should ensure that procedures for assessment and testing do not discriminate against students on the grounds of any appropriate protected characteristics. An example is in the use of language in the classroom by students and teachers.

Student Welfare and Pastoral Support

Codes of conduct for students must not discriminate between students, or ethnic groups. School clothing should not be a limiting factor on attendance. For example, Education Department guidance is to eliminate restrictive practices in the availability of school uniform.

Exclusions need to be monitored to ensure that there is no prejudice towards students or ethnic groups. Appeal committees should try to have a gender balance and, where appropriate, an ethnic balance. Questioning and other formalities need sensitive handling, such as the use of the term "forename" rather than "Christian" name.

Parental Issues

In some homes, it is sometimes difficult to give students support in their learning away from school, such as with homework tasks and work experience. Appropriate support (such as homework clubs) can overcome problems related to completion of homework tasks and improve basic skills. Counselling should be available to deal with bullying and sexual harassment both in and out of school. Students and their parents should know what measures will be taken against offenders and that the school takes such matters very seriously indeed. Child abuse procedures should be known by all staff and appropriate training given.

Equal Opportunities and the Community

A sound approach to equal opportunities by a school will influence the outside community as it comes into contact with the school and as its students move into adulthood in the community. But careful watch needs to be kept on activities where the school has limited control. The two key areas are work experience and outside contractors working on site.

Work experience will be carefully checked on grounds of possible gender or race bias and employers should subscribe to the school's code on equal opportunities. Some training of staff and employers may prove useful in this context, as well as a clearly laid down work experience policy that includes equal opportunity issues.

Contractors on site will be carefully screened and account will be taken of whether contractors operate an equal opportunities policy.

Staff issues

Equality of opportunity has been a long-standing feature of our employment practices and procedures, and the School seeks to ensure that no job applicant or employee is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of sex, race, age, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage, pregnancy or maternity, part-time working, or fixed-term working.

Securing Impact

The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the efficacy of the Equal Opportunities Policies should be transparent and clear to all. A report will be provided for consideration by Governors at regular intervals.

Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010, people with protected characteristics (i.e. sex, race, age, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage, pregnancy or maternity) have a right not to be discriminated against in employment or access to goods or services. The Act also places specific duties which require schools:

- (a) to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and
- (b) to prepare and publish equality objectives.

The school routinely collects a large amount of data which presents performance statistics broken down by a number of relevant characteristics (sex, race, SEN etc.) and which includes comparative analysis with national statistics and with comparable schools. This data is available publicly via the Department for Education website.

The Governing Body receives regular reports monitoring the effectiveness of policies which are directly relevant to its Equality Duty.

The school has prepared equality objectives and these are set out in appendix 3, below, and are published as part of this statement.

A school has also drawn up and implemented an accessibility plan, aimed at:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Policies and Objectives

Set out below are the School's:

- Equal Opportunities Policy for Staff (appendix 1)
- Equal Opportunities Policy for Students (appendix 2)
- Equality Objectives for the period 2022 to 2025 (appendix 3)

Approved by: EXPC Committee
Date: November 2022
Interim review and update by GB March 2024
Full Review Date: October 2025

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR STAFF

Statement of Policy

The governing body, the Headmaster and staff recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and, although equality of opportunity has been a long-standing feature of our employment practices and procedures, have made the decision to adopt a formal equal opportunities policy. Breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.

The aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant or employee is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of sex, race, age, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage, pregnancy or maternity, part-time working, or fixed-term working.

The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance. We will maintain a supportive working environment in which no staff member feels under threat or feels intimidated.

Recruitment and Selection

- The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions do not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.
- Promotion and advancement will be made on merit, and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.
- Job descriptions will be revised to ensure that they are in line with our equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.
- We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies.
- We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources that provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.
- All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.
- All employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.
- Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person, where possible, in accordance with the selection policy approved by the governing body.
- Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.
- Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.

Training and Promotion

- Senior staff will receive training in the application of this policy to ensure that they are aware of its contents and provisions.
- All promotions will be in line with this policy.

Monitoring

- We will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy.
- Monitoring will involve:

- the collection and classification of information regarding race in terms of ethnic/national origin, the sex and disability of all current employees;
- the examination by ethnic/national origin, sex and disability of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants; and
- recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.

The results of monitoring will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and staff.

Monitoring of applicants, as well as current staff will be undertaken, so as to ascertain the effectiveness of the policy and to help deal with complaints from unsuccessful candidates for vacancies.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Introduction

Reading School is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for every person in the school community regardless of sex, race, age, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. Every attempt will be made to ensure that equal opportunities are reflected in all aspects of school life. Prejudice and discrimination in any form will be tackled, and students, parents and staff must report any incident where they believe these are being exhibited. Students and parents must report any incident to the Form tutor and staff to their line manager or member of the senior management, if appropriate.

Reading School is committed to providing:

- an environment which stimulates and motivates students
- an education that realises the full potential of every individual student
- an atmosphere in which everyone flourishes, achieves and feels valued
- a caring and well-disciplined school.

Within a friendly, caring and stimulating community Reading School will endeavour to educate and prepare its students from diverse backgrounds, cultures, faiths and communities for citizenship in a modern society.

The values of Reading School are grounded on respect for:

- working hard and to the best of one's ability and aptitude
- diversity of achievement in all areas of the school's life
- oneself and each other
- the wider community and the environment

The aims of Reading School are given below:

- to promote equal opportunities for all
- to enable every student to develop his aesthetic, intellectual, cultural, social and physical talents
- to help students consider carefully key moral, religious and spiritual aspects of life
- to help students become considerate and responsible citizens able to make well-informed choices about their future

These aims form the core principles underpinning this equal opportunities policy. Equal opportunities is concerned with "enabling all individuals to develop their personal qualities and talents to the full, to learn to respond sensitively to ideas and beliefs that may not coincide with their own, and to respect views arrived at by reasoned thinking and argument. It requires that individuals accept the interdependence and common obligations of all human beings" (OfSTED).

It is widely accepted that students should be prepared for "adult life in multi-cultural, multi-lingual Europe, interdependent with the rest of the world".

Reading School has set itself the task of fostering tolerant, fair-minded attitudes and respect for others and to prepare individuals for citizenship as part of a British, European and world-wide community.

General Policy

- The School condemns racism, sexism and negative attitudes towards disability, homophobia and discrimination of any kind.
- All students should be helped to develop self-esteem and should feel valued as individuals.
- Students will be given opportunities to discuss and understand racism, sexism, homophobia as well as other forms of prejudice. It is important that everyone understand the hurt and harm caused by discrimination and prejudice of any kind.
- Dealing with discriminatory behaviour, abuse and intimidation is the responsibility of everyone - all students and staff can expect to be listened to and have their complaints investigated. If a student or a member of staff feels her or his complaint has not been properly dealt with s/he may take the matter to the Headmaster or the Chair of Governors.
- Students or staff who have suffered racist, sexist, homophobic or other forms of personal verbal or physical abuse or intimidation will be supported by the school and anyone who has committed such offences will be appropriately dealt with.
- Students should be encouraged to be open-minded and to challenge prejudice.
- The school's performance in equalising opportunities will be monitored, including areas such as examination entries and successes, and school leaver destinations.
- Bullying and harassment of any kind will be dealt with swiftly and may lead to exclusion or dismissal where any allegation is proven with no extenuating circumstance.
- The governing body will monitor and keep under review its recruitment, appointments, promotions, staff training and other staff policies to ensure there is no overt or covert discrimination. However, the right is reserved, for specific appointments, to recruit either a male or female member of staff to comply with existing legislation (e.g. the supervision of students changing for PE).

Ethnic and Cultural Issues

- Students should be encouraged to contribute to their education and the education of others by bringing their cultural experience, values and perceptions to it.
- Attention should be given to the integration of students from different ethnic groups in the classroom and throughout the life of the school.

Gender

- Students should be encouraged to aim high and to utilise all the opportunities available to them in all areas of the curriculum and school life.
- Careers education should make students aware of the full range of opportunities available to them in a modern society.

Physical Disability

- Every effort should be made to integrate students with disabilities into the normal life of the school and the classroom.
- Classroom strategies should be adopted to help students with disabilities.
- The school will continue to improve access for students with mobility disabilities.

Sexual Orientation

The school has identified the measures it is taking in response to the Ofsted supplementary guidance regarding actions in schools to prevent homophobic bullying, published in February 2013, and will seek to ensure that these are fully effective.

Background

All parents should be made aware of financial help and concessions available in cases of hardship.

Race Equality

Reading School is committed to tackling racial discrimination in all its forms and is determined to promote race equality and good race relations across all areas of school activity. The policies of Reading School should reflect this commitment. Particular areas of importance include:

- Progress, attainment and assessment
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Student's personal development and pastoral care
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Admissions and attendance
- Curriculum provision
- Religious faith
- Staff recruitment and professional development
- Partnerships with parents and communities

Concluding Statement

Reading School aims to be aware needs of all are met. This Equal Opportunities Policy makes explicit the values of the school and seeks to ensure that all stakeholders are committed to upholding these values. Everyone in the school is of equal value and should have equal opportunities in school and in life. The governing body, the Headmaster and the staff recognise their responsibility for making this happen. This means being both flexible and adaptable.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2022-2025

Context

Reading School has been on a journey to ensure that our school is an inclusive one that provides equal opportunities for all our student and staff community, whatever their ethnicity, background, ability or gender. Our school has gradually become an increasingly diverse one, possibly reflecting the increasing and changing diversity in wider society. With well over 50% of the student community coming from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a number of students with a diagnosed additional need, as well as students openly expressing their sexuality and/or gender change, we are committed to ensure all our students' voices are heard, supported if needed and celebrated.

The use of the term 'journey' has been deliberate as it implies that getting to a place where everyone feels included and respected is an ongoing one, where we will face and overcome challenges as well as have opportunities to celebrate. By using our school values of excellence, integrity, leadership and community as a framework, we aim to create an environment where all our school community is seen, heard and respected while working towards a shared vision.

Equality and diversity should be viewed through the lens of strength and opportunity, rather than something to 'address' within our school as seen through a single lens of meeting statutory requirements.

While equality and diversity are crucial to eliminate discrimination and unfair treatment, it also means celebrating people from all backgrounds and with different characteristics. By promoting positive equity, children and young people are given a foundation for anti-discriminatory values which will benefit them during their journey within school and beyond.

Reading School is one of the ten oldest schools in the United Kingdom with a 900-year history. It is one that has, more recently, invested in ways to add to our student's academic knowledge through character education with the aim of adding to the tool kits of young people who can thrive in the modern world when they leave.

Therefore, being one of the UK's leading schools depends on us having a diverse and inclusive culture and diversity and inclusion is an area where we aim to be leaders.

Our school is a richly diverse one which reflects the diversity of the wider world. Our efforts to continue to evolve and to keep pace with the change in today's society will continue now and into the future, as we invite our whole school community to celebrate diverse people, cultures and lived experiences during our journey together.

Our current approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

By working within statutory frameworks, legislation and policy and by using sources of best practice and expertise, Reading School's approach to diversity and inclusion includes:

- Being committed to creating a safe school and workplace free of any form of bullying, harassment and discrimination. If bullying, harassment or discrimination is identified, responding quickly to minimise harm, while providing victims and perpetrators, an assessed level of support.
- Ensuring policies such as diversity, bullying, safeguarding, recruitment and admissions policies are up to date and relevant.
- Providing anti-discriminatory and ethics and values training for staff.
- Providing opportunities within the school and extra curriculum for students to learn, discuss and demonstrate all aspects of diversity and inclusion.
- Seeking feedback from the school community in relation to its diversity and inclusion efforts in order to tailor its approach.
- To evidence how Reading School is committed to its Equality and Diversity strategy and in order to share what equality, equity, difference, inclusivity and diversity look like.

Definitions

Equality refers to having due regard to eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. Crucially it also is concerned with advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. Thus, there needs to be an emphasis on fostering good relations.

Diversity refers to the variety of our students, staff, families and all stakeholders which make up the whole school community. This variety refers to characteristics which include; identity; gender; ethnicity; sexual orientation; disability; age; religion; belief; culture; socioeconomic background; family and marital and civil partnership status.

Inclusion refers to the sense of belonging where our whole school community feels valued and able to bring their whole selves to the school in a way that is authentic and respects the boundary between personal and school lives. Through the leadership of students, staff and the school community, we as individuals can contribute to an inclusive culture through everyday behaviours.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which applies to public bodies, including Reading School, as an academy. The PSED extends equality duties to all protected characteristics.

- Sex
- Race
- Age
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage

The duty came in to effect in April 2011 and has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, the governing body are required to have due regard to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics, and between people who share a characteristic and those who do not share it.

Thus, we have a Public Sector Equality Duty linked to the Equality Act 2010 and, for the period 2022-2025, Reading School has equality priorities which will be a focus within all equality work, linked as appropriate with diversity and inclusion initiatives:

1. Advance equality of opportunity
2. To continue to identify ways in which to celebrate the diversity of the school and to continue to develop our cultural competence in understanding our school communities' needs by listening to their voices.

What are we doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

- We take into account equality issues in relation to exclusions and admissions
- We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled students, and have a separate policy on this issue and we have an accessibility plan (2022-2025)
- We actively promote an environment that champions equality of opportunity through our core values – excellence, integrity, leadership and community.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through the work of our Community Relations Department and the Reading Way.

What are we doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups?

- We collect and analyse data to inform our planning and identify school development priorities and objectives (as shown in the Annual Operational Plan)
- We have procedures to identify students with SEND, EAL and Pupil Premium needs.
- We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of students and utilise this data to put in place strategies, actions and interventions aimed at closing any attainment gaps.

What are we doing to foster positive relationships and a spirit of belonging and community?

- We proactively prepare our students for life in a diverse, modern society and ensure that the Reading Way and our rich curriculum offer effectively promotes social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of our students.

Our 2022-2025 Equality Objectives

1. To embed our commitment to equality of opportunity for boys from all backgrounds, including less advantaged backgrounds, so that the promotion of opportunity from talented students with aptitude, ability and attitude flourish at Reading School. The focus on enhancing social mobility for instance through the Future Stories programme will ensure that the purpose of providing opportunities for our students to be the best version of themselves is illustrated by our commitment to 'level the playing field.'
2. To further develop strategies to maximise opportunities for students from all backgrounds to have access to Boarding.
3. To utilise attitudinal and other data on student participation in the Electives programme and other Reading Way activities and initiatives to inform our planning and decision making with regards to the inclusive curriculum offer at Reading School.
4. To develop an approach to the analysis of data regarding recruitment trends with regard to gender, race and disability and report to the Staff Pay and Performance Committee of the Governing Body with recommendations for action.
5. Ensure that we advance the equality of opportunity and celebrate the diversity of the school focusing on cultural capital, for instance, through the work of the Community Relations Office. Furthermore, any evidence of non-compliance with the school's public sector equality duty

In addition to the Equal Opportunities policy, Reading School continues to monitor the effectiveness of other relevant policies which are important to the successful achievement of the five objectives for 2022-2025. For example:

- The Management of Student Behaviour Policy
- The Discriminatory Incidents policy
- The SEN and Inclusion policy
- The Sex and Relationships Education policy
- The 2022-2024 Accessibility Plan

Reading School's Equality objectives are to be monitored and reviewed annually. Progress against objectives 1-5 inclusive will be reported to the Governing Body through the regular Headmaster's Report to the Full Governing Body and the Annual Pupil Premium Report. There will be an interim report on progress to the EXPC Committee of the Governing Body in March 2024. Furthermore, progress will be monitored with reference to the progress reports linked to the Annual Operational Plan progress updates.

Contact

If you have any questions about Reading School's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion or would like to discuss partnerships, projects, research or collaborations, please contact:

Dal Singh, Community Relations Manager & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
dsingh@reading-school.co.uk
0118 9015600